

THE SOCIOECONOMIC ROOTS OF SUPPORT FOR DEMOCRACY AND THE QUALITY OF DEMOCRACY IN LATIN AMERICA*

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Resumen

Este artículo examina cómo el contexto y estado socioeconómico afectan el apoyo intrínseco y patente hacia la democracia en América Latina. Aquella relación es importante, ya que hace tiempo los teóricos han propuesto que las actitudes ciudadanas influyen en la estabilidad y, más recientemente, en la calidad de la democracia. Los resultados empíricos indican que es más probable que los más educados y ricos apoyen a la autoridad democrática y los valores de “autoexpresión” que encarnan y protegen las instituciones democráticas. Al nivel macro, el desarrollo económico fomenta el apoyo intrínseco mientras que la desigualdad y la pobreza tienen efectos negativos para el apoyo expresado hacia la autoridad democrática en América Latina. Basado en este análisis, argumento que las condiciones socioeconómicas juegan roles cruciales en la formación del apoyo a la democracia. Concluyo con una convocatoria a investigar más explícitamente sobre la conexión entre el apoyo a la democracia y la calidad de la democracia en América Latina postautoritaria.

Abstract

This article examines how socioeconomic context and status affect intrinsic and overt support for democracy among Latin American publics. The relationship is important since many theorists have long proposed that citizens' attitudes matter for democratic stability and, more recently, the quality of democracy. The empirical results indicate that educated and wealthy individuals are most likely to support democratic governance and the values of “self-expression” that democratic institutions embody and protect. At the macro level, economic development fosters intrinsic support while inequality and poverty have negative effects on overt support for democratic governance in Latin America. Based on this analysis, I argue that aggregate and individual socioeconomic conditions play crucial roles in the formation of support for democracy. I conclude with a call for more explicit research into the connection between democratic support and the quality of democracy in post-authoritarian Latin America.

PALABRAS CLAVE • Apoyo a la democracia • Calidad de la democracia • Desigualdad • Pobreza • Desarrollo económico

I. INTRODUCTION

A recent report by the United Nations Development Programme (2004) describes at length the challenges of constructing high-quality democracy in Latin America given its track record of

* I would like to thank Juan Pablo Luna, Cristobal Aninat, and two anonymous reviewers for their excellent comments on previous drafts. I would also like to recognize the Instituto de Estudios Políticos at the Universidad Nacional Andrés Bello for their strong institutional support for this research.

uneven economic development and extreme rates of poverty and inequality. The report also shows that public support for democracy in Latin America differs substantially from country to country and year to year (see also Payne et al. 2002). Is this variation explained by these uneven patterns of socioeconomic context –economic development, poverty, and inequality – and socioeconomic status– education and income? The answer to this question is crucial since support for democracy has been linked to democratic durability and, more recently, the quality of democracy.

The Civic Culture posits that support for democracy buoys democracy (Almond & Verba, 1963). Mishler and Rose frame the relationship in these terms, “stable or increasing levels of support facilitate stable democracy, whereas declining levels of support undermine democracy and threaten its collapse” (Mishler & Rose, 1999: 78).¹ In the presence of modest and varying support for democracy, the procedural minimum of “electoral democracy”² has remained largely intact in the most recent wave of democratization in Latin America despite coups, self-coups, presidential ousters, and the occasional suppression of political institutions. Although Latin America has not witnessed the reverse wave of the type Huntington warns, the quality of democracy varies substantially in the region (Altman & Pérez-Liñán, 2002).

Support for democracy may, indeed, influence the quality of democracy in Latin America and elsewhere, but we are, as discussed below, at the early stages of theorizing about this relationship. I examine whether support for democracy –conceived in terms of “intrinsic” and “overt” support (Inglehart & Welzel, 2003)– is a function of socioeconomic context and status. The analysis employs highly comparable data from thirteen country-years of *World Values Surveys* coupled with high-quality cross-national data, including gini coefficients from UNU-WIDER, poverty levels from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), and other economic indicators from the World Bank. Therefore the results, inferences, and conclusions should not be unduly hindered by data issues.

The following section proposes how support for democracy is linked to the quality of democracy in the Latin America. From there, I explore the relationships between socioeconomic context and status and support for democracy, placing Latin America in comparative perspective. Then I describe the data, model, and methods paying special attention to previous research on support for democracy in Latin America. After presenting the results of the hypothesis tests, I discuss how this research advances the academic debate regarding support for democracy and highlights theoretical and empirical lacunae in our understanding of how support for democracy influences the quality of democracy in the region.

¹ However, an absolute threshold of public support for democracy below which democratic institutions cannot function is impossible to identify since public support is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for democratic stability (Linz and Stepan, 1996; Diamond, Hartlyn & Linz, 1999).

² Defined here as a political system in which the “most powerful collective decision makers are selected through fair, honest, and periodic elections in which candidates freely compete for votes and in which virtually all the adult population is eligible to vote”, and is characterized by the “existence of those civil and political freedoms to speak, publish, assemble, and organize that are necessary to political debate and the conduct of electoral campaigns”(Huntington, 1991: 7).

II. SUPPORT FOR DEMOCRACY AND THE QUALITY OF DEMOCRACY IN LATIN AMERICA

There are at least three mechanisms by which public support for democracy augurs in favor of high-quality democracy. First, democracy presupposes a civic culture characterized by devotion to the basic principles of democracy, mutual trust, cooperation and moderation among elites and publics, and democratic participatory norms (Almond & Verba, 1963). To extend the cultural logic to the quality of democracy, Inglehart and Welzel (2003) distinguish between “overt” support for democracy –verbal affirmation of preferences for democracy– and “intrinsic” support for democratic values such as liberty, public-expression, tolerance of diversity, interpersonal trust, and life satisfaction. In their view, overt support for democracy is little more than “lip-service” unless it is coupled with intrinsic democratic values. Moreover, their global analysis shows that support for intrinsically democratic values fosters “effective” democracy, defined as the extent to which political elites respect the rule of law within the parameters of political and civil freedoms. Overt support for democracy, on the other hand, is insignificantly but positively related to their measure of effective democracy.

While most political culture scholarship in Latin America focuses on various measures of overt support, Inglehart and Welzel’s findings suggest that intrinsic support is a key piece of the quality of democracy puzzle in the region. With this in mind, the analysis that follows tests the relationships between intrinsic *and* overt support for democracy and macro and micro-level socioeconomic conditions in Latin America.

Secondly, civil society’s response to the dual transition to democracy and markets marks another connection between support for democracy and its quality. In some cases, civic society never recovered its weakened position in the wake of a spate of domestic and international economic crises around and after the transitions³: “Moreover, [civic] interests are not only weak because of the weight of the crisis but also because of the lack of opportunities they have to influence political decisions. The new ‘rules of the game’ provide, in most countries of the region, little space for popular influence”(Oxhorn, 1998: 7).

But new research on “social accountability” has shown a growing trend of civic associations, NGO’s, and social movements working in concert with the media to monitor public officials and hold them accountable to the law, expose cases of government wrong-doing and corruption, and convince state institutions to exercise their functions of horizontal accountability (Smulovitz & Peruzzotti, 2000; Peruzzotti & Smulovitz, 2002). There is also evidence of “critical citizens” in Latin America that are similar to their counterparts in Europe who have spearheaded the

³ Many newly-transitioned democracies in Latin America received economic assistance on terms of the Washington Consensus: floating currencies, liberalized trade, privatization, de-regulated financial sectors, and open capital markets. As a result, formal sector jobs declined and informal labor increased (Portes & Hoffman, 2003). Moreover, Huber and Solt (2004) show how structural reforms exacerbated income inequality, failed to drastically reduce poverty, and hampered democratic development in the region. There is ample variance in development, poverty, and inequality in the region, but on the whole Latin America has the world’s most unequal distribution of income (Szekely & Hilgert, 1999). And although poverty decreased somewhat during the 1990s (Szekely, 2001), in 2003 43,9% of all Latin Americans still lived below the poverty line (UNDP, 2004). In 1998-2003, poverty was highest (53,1%) in the Andean sub-region (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela), arguably where democracy is most vulnerable (UNDP, 2004: 36-40).

“new politics” (see chapters in Norris [ed.] 1999, Newton & Norris, 2000). Catterberg (2003) shows that Latin Americans⁴ who support democratic regimes and values but who are dissatisfied with the government and the political class are more likely to participate in elite-challenging political activities. While the rise of “social accountability” and “critical citizens” is likely to improve the quality of democracy in the region, thus far their achievements have been somewhat limited and extremely uneven throughout across the region and over time.

If socioeconomic context and status help understand why support for democracy varies in Latin America, then support for democracy is indirectly related to the quality of democracy via civil society and the citizen actions it promotes. Thus, my analysis may add a link to the causal chain connecting political culture to macro-political outcomes.

Thirdly, the erosion of support for democracy may be related to the rise of populism or “neo-populism” which has damaged the quality of democracy in the post-authoritarian era. Neo-populist leaders come to power riding waves of popular support for charismatic “anti-establishment” and/or “anti-elite” political discourses (Roberts, 1995; Weyland, 1996). Once in office, these executives often use decree and plebiscitary powers to bypass legislatures and take steps to deliberately weaken supreme courts, bureaucracies, and other public institutions that might otherwise check their authority (O’Donnell, 1994; Stokes, 2001; Weyland, 2001). In search of institutional support, they form pacts with the armed forces, technocrats, the private sector, international investors or some permutation thereof (Roberts, 1995, 2003; Corrales, 1998; Hawkins, 2003; Barr, 2003; Dugas, 2003). Popular support for neo-populists in the form of votes and economic expectations is well documented (Weyland, 2002; Stokes, 2001), but these behaviors and expectations may reveal the tip of a larger iceberg at the base of which resides low support for democratic governance.

I test the extent to which the socioeconomic conditions that contribute to the rise of neo-populist politics also diminish public support for democracy. If so, measures of overt support for democracy that tap support for delegative and autocratic rule under the guise of democratic “rules of the game” may be more relevant to democratic quality or its “effectiveness” in Latin America than Inglehart and Welzel’s (2003) analysis reveals.

III. SOCIOECONOMIC CONTEXT AND SUPPORT FOR DEMOCRACY

This section reviews prior theoretical and empirical evidence of the relationships between economic development, poverty, inequality, and support for democracy in democratizing contexts by examining Latin America in comparative perspective.

1. Economic Development

In light of the high correlation between development and democracy, Lipset (1959) asks two classic questions: Why do states transition from authoritarianism to democracy? How do democratic states resist reversion to authoritarianism? He advances two hypotheses which

⁴ The four Latin American countries included in Catterberg’s study are Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Mexico.

Przeworski et al. (88) label the “endogenous” and “exogenous” hypotheses, summarized as follows:

1. Endogenous Hypothesis: “Democracies may be more likely to emerge as countries develop economically, or
2. Exogenous Hypothesis: ...having been established for whatever reasons, democracies may be more likely to survive in developed countries”.

Scholars find support for the endogenous hypothesis via two interrelated mechanisms. According to the first, modernization generates resources (education and income) that the middle and working classes can draw on to organize and to mobilize for their stake in the democratic process (Moore, 1966; Rueschemeyer; Stephens & Stephens; 1992). According to Lipset, higher levels of education instill democratic values: “Education presumably broadens men’s outlooks, enables them to understand the need for norms of tolerance, restrains them from adhering to extremist or monistic doctrines, and increases their capacity to make rational electoral choices” (Lipset, 1959: 79). Despite claims to the contrary (Lagos, 2001), most analysts show that support for democracy increases with education and income in Latin America (UNDP, 2004; Graham & Sukhtankar, 2004; Graham & Pettinato, 2001; Booth & Bayer Richard, 1998).⁵ Therefore, we should expect individual socioeconomic status, measured by education and income levels, to generate overt support for democracy in Latin America.

In the second mechanism, improving socioeconomic conditions at the macro and micro levels have been linked with a value shift from material and security priorities to post-material goals related to individual freedom, quality of life, self-expression, lifestyle choice, and participation (Inglehart, 1977, 1990, 1997). However, Inglehart warns that postmaterialists in developing countries tend to have “weakly crystallized values” (Inglehart, 1999: 246). Therefore it would be novel to find that higher macroeconomic development correlates with intrinsic support for democracy in the Latin American sub-sample. Among individuals, Huntington’s asserts that highly educated people “tend to develop the characteristics of trust, satisfaction, and competence that go with democracy” (Huntington, 1991: 65-66). Evidence from Central America links higher standards of living and education to interpersonal trust, tolerance, and the extension of political rights to others (Booth & Bayer Richard, 1998). Another study argues that wealthier and more educated Latin Americans are more satisfied with their lives, after controlling for attitudes towards the market economy and democracy (Graham & Pettinato, 2001: 257). Thus, I also expect socioeconomic status, again measured by citizens’ education and income levels, to be positively associated with intrinsic support for democracy in Latin America.

2. Inequality

Rethinking the theoretical and statistical foundations underlying large-N studies of the relationship between economic development and democracy (Przeworski et al., 1997, 2000), Boix (2003) and Boix and Stokes (2003) argue that degrees of inequality shape citizens’ preferences for democracy and distribution. Boix and Stokes use the following logic as support for Lipset’s “endogenous hypothesis”:

⁵ There is also evidence that support for democracy in Latin America is positively related to social class (Catterberg, 1989; Moreno, 2001).

As countries develop, incomes become more equally distributed. Income inequality means that the redistributive scheme that would win democratic support (the one supported by the median voter) would deprive the rich of less income than the one the median voter would support if income distribution were highly unequal. Hence the rich find a democratic tax structure to be less expensive for them as their country gets wealthier, and they are more willing to countenance democratization (2003: 539-540).⁶

Stated more generally, inequality influences citizens' choices with respect to the viability of the political regime *status quo* –authoritarianism or democracy– at a given historical moment.⁷

Boix's theory, which sees regime preference as influenced by instrumental motives, clashes with the notion that public support for democracy is a set of "deep political sentiments" that are "not easily depleted through disappointments with outputs" (Easton, 1965: 274). As the theory goes, democracies that resolve political crises and perform well economically over a long period of time build "reservoirs of legitimacy" that sustain them in good times and in bad (Lipset, 1981; Easton, 1975). Despite false alarms that democracy was being "overloaded" with insatiable citizen demands (Crozier, Huntington & Watanuki, 1975), the "reservoir" theory holds quite well for countries that democratized in the post-War era (Klingemann & Fuchs, 1995; Norris[ed], 1999). Finding that, in third wave Latin American democracies, overt support for democracy is more a function of inequality than economic development would nuance the functionality of the "reservoir" theory in new democracies and may reveal some of its assumptions as context-bound, i.e. to the immediate post-War era.

The association between intrinsic support for democracy and inequality is less clear. Studying one component of Inglehart and Welzel's intrinsic support measure, Graham and Pettinato (2001) find that those who place themselves high on a relative economic "ladder" that represents society⁸ are more satisfied with their lives. This measures inequality in an inherent and subjective manner. Additionally, citizens are more satisfied if they perceive their current economic situation as higher than it was in the past and if they are optimistic about their upward mobility. While not inherently tapping inequality, contextual inequality rates may affect citizens' subjective perceptions about their socioeconomic progress and their prospects for progress. Although for the sake of hypothesis testing I envision a negative link between inequality and intrinsic support for democracy scale, it is ultimately an empirical question if objective aggregate measures will reproduce conclusions made with respect to subjective individual approximations of inequality.

3. Poverty

The effect of poverty on support for democracy is under-theorized and is not generally distinguished from economic development. Most countries use a range of social policies –like pensions, health,

⁶ Boix (2003) also incorporates the mobility of assets or "asset specificity" into his model on the grounds that the greater ease with which capitalists can transfer assets abroad to avoid the tax structure of democracy, the more likely they are to prefer democracy to authoritarianism. Boix derives formal proof and empirical evidence for his model.

⁷ Analyzing the period 1950-1990, Boix and Stokes (2003) claim that, in a given year, the probability of democratic breakdown reaches 20 percent in highly unequal agrarian countries.

⁸ "The economic ladder question (ELQ) asked respondents to place themselves on a 10-step ladder representing their society, on which the poor were on the first step and the rich were on the tenth" (Graham, 2001: 242).

price controls, and subsidies— to offer a modicum of social insurance and, thereby, reduce poverty. Access to services and transfer payments in most of Latin America is predicated on formal employment. The structural adjustment plans that followed economic crises in the 1980s stipulated drastic cuts in social spending and shrunk formal and public sector employment (Huber, 1996). With the exception of Chile, where the dictatorship fully liberalized the economy, this process was carried out under democratic “rules of the game”. Therefore political leaders had a large stake in legitimizing these reforms among the poor who represented the electoral majority (Stokes, 2001). Not surprisingly, as Stokes documents, clientelism and targeted social policies were increasingly used to secure electoral support. In the process, it is likely that support for low quality democracy with strong executives, weak institutions, and poor representation was consolidated among these sectors as well.

Thus overt support for democracy should be lower in countries with high poverty rates because there will be more support for low-quality governance in such contexts. Though I have no strong theoretical reasons to expect poverty rates to affect intrinsic support for democracy net of economic development, inequality, income, and education, I test the hypothesis that poverty and intrinsic support for democracy are negatively related. Even if poverty only affects overt support for democracy, it may still represent an important indirect effect of poverty on the quality of democracy.

IV. DATA, METHODS AND MODEL

To model these relationships I use survey data from thirteen Latin American country-years across two waves of the *World Values Survey* (2004).⁹ I combine these data with high-quality development, inequality, and poverty, data to form a hierarchical data set. Researchers who would like to use ordinary least squares (OLS) regression with hierarchical data must take precautions in order to reduce the amount of error correlation within countries that results from pooling. If not, OLS will produce standard errors that will be biased downwards, i.e. too small. Therefore, I estimate the OLS regression models below with cluster-corrected robust standard errors. It is worth emphasizing that this method does not change the OLS coefficients, but rather corrects for biased standard errors that OLS would otherwise render. In other words, this is a more rigorous test of the hypotheses represented in the models.

Although my analysis is limited to the *World Values Survey* whereas Graham and Sukhtankar’s (2004) use the extensive Latinobarómetro (2000-2002), I improve upon their research on the effects of socioeconomic context on support for democracy in Latin America in two areas. First, I use more explicit economic predictors. Graham and Sukhtankar operationalize “economic crisis” with a country-year dummy variable for any country in which GDP *per capita* shrunk in 2002. They reason “[t]his definition lets us compare the same set of countries over time, in periods in which they may or may not have been in crisis” (2004: 354, fn. 13). As a result, the “non-crisis” countries were Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, and Peru, while the rest were coded “crisis” countries. Unfortunately, this does not account for the contractions in

⁹ The country-years are Argentina (1995, 1999), Brazil (1997), Chile (1996, 2000), Dominican Republic (1996), Mexico (1995-96, 1997), Peru (1996, 2001), Uruguay (1996), and Venezuela (1996, 2000).

GDP *per capita* suffered in Brazil (2001), Peru (2001), and Costa Rica (2000, 2001). In their three-year design (2000-2002), coding countries as “non-crisis” who suffered economic crisis in 2000 and/or 2001 clouds the effect of economic crisis on support for democracy. I model unemployment and inflation separately.

Secondly, since my measures of support for democracy offer a multidimensional view of democracy they are more useful to the study of quality of democracy than Graham and Sukhtankar’s measure. Graham and Sukhtankar’s coding for support for democracy is vague: “Index of statements preferring democracy over authoritarian government (1-3)” (Graham & Sukhtankar, 2004: 376). One may deduce that they are using a survey question based on Linz’s (1978) insight that on the eve of regime breakdown citizens are either loyal, semi-loyal, or disloyal to the regime. The question asks respondents with which of the following statements they most agree:

- a. Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government.
- b. In certain circumstances, authoritarian government could be preferable to a democratic one.
- c. It does not matter to people like me whether we have democratic government or a non-democratic government.¹⁰

This is a common measure of support for democracy in Latin America and around the world (Lagos, 2003a, 2003b, 2001; Payne et al., 2002; Bratton & Mattes, 2001). However mounting evidence suggests the Linz question may be a confusing way to measure support for democracy in post-authoritarian Latin America. The Chilean case provides an illustration. Support for democracy as measured by the Linz question is consistently near or below the regional average in Chile (Payne et al., 2002; Huneus, 2003). Yet post-authoritarian Chile has enjoyed political stability, economic growth, and some of the region’s highest scores on objective measures of quality of democracy (Altman & Pérez-Liñán, 2002: 92). So why does democracy get low marks? Huneus and Maldonado (2003) argue convincingly that support for democracy measured by the Linzian question is related to Chileans’ assessments of the Pinochet regime, their evaluations of the current administration, and ideological placement. While the lack of democratic breakdowns in re-democratizing Latin America makes testing how well the Linz question predicts democratic breakdowns impossible, the Chilean case suggests that at the very least the Linz question reflects respondents’ evaluations of historical political processes, enduring ideological sentiments, and support for incumbents. Conceivably, similar patterns exist elsewhere.

Furthermore, the Linz question suffers from major inconsistencies, as Table 1 summarizes. The first column reports percentages from the entire sample and the second column reports percentages among those who responded that democracy is preferable to any other form of government, i.e. agreeing with (a) on the Linz question. Clearly, many of those we might categorize as supporters of democracy in Latin America based on the Linz question hold contrasting, less democratic values. Nearly half of those who stated preference for democracy over any other form of government prioritize economic development over democracy. Matching what Gronke

¹⁰ Since Graham and Sukhtankar report a Pseudo R^2 , we must presume that they operationalized this dependent variable in one of two non-linear ways: a binomial variable ($a = 1$, b and $c = 0$) or an ordinal variable ($a = 3$, $c = 2$, $b = 1$). In this case, the former operationalization is superior since it is unclear that these statements can logically be arranged in an ordinal manner.

TABLE 1: Indicators of Support for Democratic Governance in 18 Latin American Countries

	% total	% (a) Linz
Support the president going beyond the law	58.1	38.6
Believe that economic development is more important than democracy	56.3	48.1
Support authoritarian government if it would solve economic problems	54.7	44.9
Believe democracy does not solve the country's problems	43.9	35.8
Believe there can be democracy without political parties	40.0	34.2
Believe there can be democracy without a national congress	38.2	32.2
Support the president restoring order by force	37.2	32.3
Support the president controlling the media	37.2	32.4
Support the president governing without Congress and political parties	36.0	32.9

Note: N varies between a low of 16,183 and a high of 17,194 depending on the survey question.

Source: Latinobarómetro 2002, cited in UNDP (2004, 137). Translations by author.

and Levitt (2004) highlight with data from the *World Values Survey* nearly one third of democrats similarly defined would grant the president unconstitutional and “delegative” powers. This evidence suggests that support for democracy is multi- rather than uni-dimensional and coexists alongside other priorities and qualifications. My second dependent variable described below, overt support for democracy, takes into account some of these contingencies.

1. Dependent Variables

As mentioned, I analyze the effects of socioeconomic context and status on two measures of support for democracy taken from Inglehart and Welzel (2003). The first set of models focuses on intrinsic support of democracy via support for self-expression values and the second series of models examines overt support for democracy. I choose to replicate Inglehart and Welzel’s overt and intrinsic support variables because it permits greater comparability between their work at the global level and my work at the regional level in Latin America. While one could argue that other specifications of intrinsic and/or overt support are possible, and in some countries even preferable, the analysis below can and should serve as a fruitful starting point, rather than an exhaustive inspection of these possibilities.

2. Intrinsic Support for Democracy

Following Inglehart and Welzel (2003), I use five items to measure and operationalize intrinsic support for democracy: (a) tolerance of diversity,¹¹ (b) public self-expression,¹² (c) liberty and

¹¹ “Not mentioned” for “disliked neighbors” coded 1 and dichotomized against 0; scores added for neighbors with AIDS (V58) and homosexual neighbors (V60). Forms a 0-2 scale.

¹² “Have done” for “signing petitions” (V134) coded 1 and dichotomized against 0.

participation,¹³ (d) interpersonal trust,¹⁴ and (e) life satisfaction.¹⁵ For the sake of space, I refer you to the question codes in the footnotes for more details about question wording and coding procedures. My first operational step is to conduct explorative principal components analysis without rotation on the five self-expression items.¹⁶ Then I standardize the five items 0-100 and weight them by their factor loadings. Finally, I add the five items together and divide by five to form a scale that ranges 0-41.

Some may object to the usefulness of this measure in the Latin American context. In particular, it could be argued that tolerance in Latin America might be better captured by incorporating elements of race and/or ethnicity as opposed to, or in addition to, homosexuality and/or AIDS. But the wide variation in the social and political importance, let alone the meanings, of race and ethnicity across the countries in my data set, would make the results extremely difficult to interpret. Case studies are ideal settings for exploring diverse specifications of intrinsic support in Latin America.

3. Overt Support for Democracy

My second dependent variable replicates Inglehart and Welzel's overt support for democracy scale. The scale two has pro-democratic components and two pro-authoritarian components. In this operationalization, true democrats score highest, followed by respondents who espouse both democratic and authoritarian values or only contingent support for democracy, and citizens with outright disdain for democratic governance receive the lowest scores.

Two statements comprise the pro-democratic components: "Having a democratic political system" (V157) and "Democracy may have problems but it's better than any other form of government"(V163).¹⁷ These are summed. From that sum, I subtract the summed support for "Having a leader that does not have to bother with parliament or elections" (V154) and "Having the army rule" (V156).¹⁸ The result is a 13-point scale of overt support for democracy ranging from -6 to 6. This is still an imperfect measure of overt support for democracy, but its ability to capture inconsistencies makes it preferable to the Linzian measure.

Table 2 reports country-year mean scores on intrinsic and overt support for democracy in our sample. Intrinsic support for democracy was highest in Uruguay and Argentina and lowest in Peru and Venezuela. High scores on overt support for democracy were registered by Dominican

¹³ Respondents' first and second priorities for "giving people more say in important government decisions" and "protecting freedom of speech" (V106-107) added to a four-point index, assigning 3 points for both items on first and second rank, 2 points for one of these items on first rank, 1 point for one of these items on second rank and 0 for none of these items on first or second rank. The resulting scale ranges 0-3.

¹⁴ Respondents believing "most people can be trusted" (V27) dichotomized 1 against 0.

¹⁵ A 10-point rating scale for life satisfaction (V65) ranging 0-9.

¹⁶ The results of the factor analysis are in line with Inglehart and Welzel's analysis (in parentheses) for the first and only extracted factor: tolerance of diversity = .55 (.47); public self-expression = .48 (.45); liberty and participation = .58 (.54); interpersonal trust = .33 (.34); and life satisfaction = .11 (.13).

¹⁷ Respondents could express varying levels of support for these two statements (coded values in parentheses): for V157 "very good" (3), "fairly good" (2), "fairly bad" (1) and "very bad" (0); and for V163 "agree strongly" (3), "agree" (2), "disagree" (1) and "disagree strongly" (0).

¹⁸ Support for these statements could be expressed by answering whether or not these options were "very good" (3), "fairly good" (2), "fairly bad" (1) and "very bad" (0).

TABLE 2: Mean for Intrinsic and Overt Support for Democracy

<i>Country-Year</i>	<i>Intrinsic Support</i>	<i>Overt Support</i>
Argentina 1995	20.48	3.29
Argentina 1999	20.01	2.86
Brazil 1997	19.61	1.42
Chile 1996	16.88	2.07
Chile 2000	17.65	2.28
Dom. Rep. 1996	16.52	3.94
Mexico 1995-96	18.78	1.57
Mexico 2000	17.27	1.53
Peru 1996	14.17	2.76
Peru 2001	16.33	2.50
Venezuela 1996	13.04	2.51
Venezuela 2000	14.55	2.85
Uruguay 1996	21.08	3.09
Sample Average	17.41	2.51

Source: World Values Surveys, calculations by author.

Republic, Argentina, and Uruguay while Brazil and Mexico ranked lowest. The cases of Dominican Republic, Brazil, Mexico (1995-96), and Venezuela (2000) are examples of how intrinsic and overt support for democracy do not necessarily go hand in hand.

4. Independent Variables

Table 3 summarizes the independent and control variables for the country-years in the data set. I have three indicators of modernization. At the national level, *Economic Development* is measured in GDP *per capita* in constant 2000 dollars as provided in *World Development Indicators*. In the analysis below, these figures are divided by 1000. At the individual level, *Income* is a scale ranging from a low of 1 to a high of 10 based on income deciles in home currencies.¹⁹ The question reads, “Here is a scale of incomes. We would like to know in what group your household is, counting all wages, salaries, pensions and other incomes that come in. Just give the letter of the group your household falls into, before taxes and other deductions”. *Education* is an ordinal measure of education attainment not years of education. It ranges from “no formal education” (1) to “university-level education, with degree” (9). The generic nature of the *income* and *education* scales improves their cross-country comparability.

The variable *Inequality* is composed of high-quality gini coefficients from the World Income Inequality Database (UNU-WIDER, 2005) that meet the rigorous standards set forth in Deininger

¹⁹ A full explanation of the income categories by country is available in Inglehart et al. 2004.

TABLE 3: Socioeconomic Context Independent and Control Variables

Country-Year	Gini	Poverty	GDP/cap	Inflation	Unemployment
Argentina 1995	50.71	9.76	11,252	3.17	18.8
Argentina 1999	52.35	15.88	12,410	-1.84	14.1
Brazil 1997	59.57	25.35	7,189	8.22	7.8
Chile 1996	56.38	22.35	8,438	1.71	5.4
Chile 2000	61.40	9.58	9,197	4.22	8.3
Dom. Rep. 1996	47.62	11.67	5,015	5.38	16.3
Mexico 1995-96	53.61	25.96	7,629	37.87	5.8
Mexico 2000	55.42	26.30	9,059	12.01	2.2
Peru 1996	47.93	28.38	4,582	10.54	7.0
Peru 2001	52.33	37.71	4,641	1.37	7.9
Venezuela 1996	48.56	36.41	5,982	115.52	11.8
Venezuela 2000	44.18	30.61	5,685	29.45	13.9
Uruguay 1996	42.09	4.55	8,606	26.43	10.2
Sample Average	51.70	21.89	7,668	19.54	9.96

Sources: Gini data come from UNU-WIDER; poverty data from ECLAC; GDP/cap, inflation, unemployment data from World Bank.

and Squire (1996).²⁰ The rule I used for selecting ginis is that they either match the respective country-years from the *World Values Survey* or precede them by one year.²¹ Most of the ginis are based on gross income, but for those ginis that are based on net income, I follow Deininger and Squire's guidelines and add 3.0 to the gini.²² Ginis range from a high of 61.40 in Chile to a low of 42.09 in Uruguay.

Poverty data comes from ECLAC and is measured as the percentage of the population that lives on \$2 (PPP) per day.²³ As in the selection of the ginis, poverty scores either match the respective countries-years from the *World Values Survey* or precede them by one year.²⁴ The range of variation in our sample is even greater for poverty than for inequality. Poverty is lowest in Uruguay 1996 at 4.55%, while it hits a high of 37.71% in Peru 2001. Moreover, there are three instances of poverty of less than ten percent (Uruguay 1996, Argentina 1995, and Chile 2000) and three occasions of poverty over thirty percent (Peru 2001, Venezuela 1996 and 2000).

²⁰ According to UNU-WIDER, the following ginis were coded by Deininger and Squire in 2004 for the World Bank: Brazil 1997, Chile 2000, Dominican Republic 1996, Mexico 2000, Peru 1997, Venezuela 1996 and 2000. UNU-WIDER does not provide separate citation information for this work. The remaining ginis come from two high-quality, comparable sources within in the UNU-WIDER data set: Argentina 1996 and 1998, Peru 2000 (Székely 2001) and Chile 1996, Mexico 1994, Uruguay 1995 (Székely & Hilgert, 1999). These data are available for download at www.wider.unu.edu/wiid/wiid.htm.

²¹ In two instances, ginis from the following years are used: Argentina 1995 (1996) and Peru 1996 (1997).

²² These cases are Argentina 1996 and 1998 and Peru 2000.

²³ This data is available at www.eclac.cl/badeinso/Badeinso.asp.

²⁴ Venezuela 2000 is an exception to this rule in which a poverty score from 1998, two years previous, is used. A following-year poverty score is used for Argentina 1995 (1996).

5. Control Variables

The models include a series of control variables at both the individual and country levels. At the individual level, I use common demographic controls from *World Values Survey* for Age and gender, where *Woman* is a dummy variable equal to 1.

Based on Graham and Sukhtankar's (2004) logic that economic crisis may lower support for democracy, I include two country-level indicators. *Inflation* is an annual GDP-deflator inflation rate. *Unemployment* is the average annual unemployment rate. Both measures come from *World Development Indicators*. The dummy variable *Wave* controls for factors that may vary across the two waves of the *World Values Survey* employed here.

6. Results

The hypothesis testing proceeds step-wise. In Table 4, Models 1-3 examine how economic development, inequality, and poverty affect intrinsic support for democracy, given the appropriate

TABLE 4: Development, Inequality, Poverty and Intrinsic Support for Democracy

Predictor	H ₁	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
GDP/cap	+	0.823*** (0.149)			0.707** (0.216)	0.745*** (0.178)
Inequality	-		0.133 (0.158)			-0.030 (0.098)
Poverty	-			-0.161** (0.051)	-0.047 (0.071)	-0.044 (0.058)
Inflation	-	-0.026* (0.010)	-0.039* (0.015)	-0.019 (0.013)	-0.021 (0.014)	-0.022* (0.012)
Unemployment	-	-0.033 (0.067)	0.154 (0.129)	-0.034 (0.099)	-0.052 (0.065)	-0.070 (0.097)
Income	+	0.235* (0.090)	0.492*** (0.113)	0.315** (0.084)	0.224** (0.076)	0.210** (0.066)
Education	+	0.976*** (0.095)	0.697*** (0.090)	0.846*** (0.118)	0.979*** (0.099)	0.990*** (0.087)
Age	+/-	-0.005 (0.009)	0.002 (0.011)	-0.007 (0.010)	-0.007 (0.009)	-0.007 (0.010)
Woman	+/-	0.218 (0.158)	0.298 (0.186)	0.176 (0.145)	0.197 (0.140)	0.192 (0.139)
Wave	+/-	-1.631 (0.859)	-1.752 (1.134)	-0.633 (1.176)	-1.333 (0.875)	-1.334 (0.879)
Constant	+	8.033** (2.166)	6.210 (10.540)	17.033*** (2.361)	9.771** (3.081)	11.149 (6.377)
R ²		0.133	0.102	0.118	0.134	0.134
N		12306	12306	12306	12306	12306

Note: OLS Estimates. Robust Standard Errors in parentheses. One-tailed tests.

*** p < .001, ** p < .01, * p < .05

controls. Then Model 4 combines development and poverty, and Model 5 is a full model. In Table 5, Models 6-8 model the effects of economic development, inequality, and poverty on overt support for democracy, given the same controls. Model 9 combines development and inequality, and Model 10 is a full model. Table entries are unstandardized OLS coefficients.

The results reveal some interesting patterns about intrinsic and overt support for democracy in Latin America. Looking at the aggregate indicators in Table 4, economic development boosts intrinsic support for democracy even after controlling for inequality and poverty. For these data, poverty alone (Model 3) depresses intrinsically democratic values, but its effect vanishes once GDP *per capita* is controlled for. This may be due in part to the high correlation between GDP *per capita* and poverty ($r = -0.69$). There is no consistent relationship between inequality or unemployment and intrinsic support (Models 4 and 6). Strikingly inflation has negative if somewhat weak effects on intrinsic support. To test whether or not the “life satisfaction” and “social trust” components make the Inglehart-Welzel intrinsic support index more susceptible to short run inflation, I ran three different specifications of the intrinsic support scale: (1) excluding the “life satisfaction” component, (2) excluding the “social trust” component, (3) and excluding both the “life satisfaction” and “social trust” components. Rather than disappearing, the observed influence of inflation on the various intrinsic support scales actually grew.

At the individual level, education and income are robust predictors of intrinsic support. Education is considerably more powerful than income and somewhat more reliable. These data reveal no significant associations between intrinsic support and age or gender. Given the strength of these socioeconomic status indicators the strength of economic development is even more impressive. GDP *per capita* is most likely picking up on other factors that are diffused throughout society during the process of modernization.

The models of overt support for democracy reported in Table 5 suggest that as inequality and poverty rise, we can expect overt support for democracy to decline.²⁵ However, two findings buck expectations. First, economic development does not wipe out support for non-democratic forms of government -it increases it. Before declaring the defeat of modernization theory, a couple considerations are necessary in light of the country-years in the sample and what the overt support scale measures. Argentina has the highest national income figures but the election of Carlos Menem –who bypassed and emasculated congress with a record number of decrees– to consecutive terms probably reflects public support for low-quality democracy. The second highest country-year in the sample, Chile 2000, witnessed the apogee of Joaquín Lavín -a former bureaucrat under Pinochet and, at one time, an apologist of the dictatorship. And Mexico in 2000, the third highest GDP *per capita* in the sample, was still in the midst of democratic transition.

A second surprise is that unemployment appears to strengthen, not weaken, overt support for democracy. While this casts some doubt on Graham and Sukhtankar’s (2004) “economic crisis”

²⁵ Inequality and Poverty are only mildly correlated $r = -0.045$. As a further check on multicollinearity for Model 10, the variance inflation factors (VIFs) for GDP *per cap*, Inequality, and Poverty are 3.00, 1.89, and 2.93, respectively. And in Model 5 the VIFs are 3.02, 1.87, and 2.91, respectively. These are far below the conventional cutoffs for excessive multicollinearity: double-digit VIF or a VIF > 30 .

TABLE 5: Development, Inequality, Poverty and Overt Support for Democracy

Predictor	H ₁	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10
GDP/cap	+	-0.066* (0.032)			-0.021 (0.030)	-0.076* (0.032)
Inequality	-		-0.049* (0.021)		-0.044* (0.022)	-0.039* (0.017)
Poverty	-			-0.004 (0.012)		-0.020** (0.007)
Inflation	-	-0.002 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)	0.0003 (0.004)	-0.003 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.003)
Unemployment	-	0.121** (0.013)	0.087*** (0.014)	0.108*** (0.015)	0.092*** (0.017)	0.088*** (0.015)
Income	+	0.105*** (0.027)	0.074** (0.022)	0.082** (0.023)	0.081*** (0.018)	0.079*** (0.019)
Education	+	0.142*** (0.025)	0.164*** (0.028)	0.167*** (0.028)	0.157*** (0.027)	0.157*** (0.028)
Age	+/-	0.013*** (0.002)	0.013*** (0.002)	0.012*** (0.002)	0.013*** (0.002)	0.012*** (0.002)
Woman	+/-	0.074 (0.051)	0.060 (0.055)	0.067 (0.053)	0.062 (0.055)	0.053 (0.058)
Wave	+/-	-0.040 (0.211)	-0.033 (0.191)	0.034 (0.234)	0.028 (0.193)	0.150 (0.194)
Constant	+	0.040 (0.695)	2.404* (1.103)	-0.359 (0.627)	2.311* (1.102)	2.754** (0.829)
R ²		0.095	0.101	0.092	0.101	0.104
N		11302	11302	11302	11302	11302

Note: OLS Estimates. Robust Standard Errors in parentheses. One-tailed tests.

*** p < .001, ** p < .01, * p < .05

hypothesis, this relationship is difficult to interpret effectively. In the future analysts may want to check whether individual-level employment status is a better predictor of overt support for democracy.

Education and income are perfectly in line with expectations -both increase overt support for democracy, although the effect of education is greater. Clearly, socioeconomic status impinges on overt support for democracy. And although overt support is not a matter of gender, it tends to increase slightly with age. This may reflect a re-evaluation of democracy on the part of citizens who experienced authoritarian episodes. Though not reported here, by respecifying the models with a curvilinear age term (Age²), as Graham and Sukhtankar (2004) do, I find that intrinsic support for democracy may be weaker among the youngest and oldest respondents. However, I find no consistent relationship in the overt models. Therefore, intrinsic support for democracy may reflect generational factors, but a more thorough investigation of this hypothesis is beyond the scope of this study.

The full models (5 and 10) retain two degrees of freedom and the reliability of the country-level coefficients are robust considering that only thirteen country-years are analyzed. Although these model specifications only explain around 13% of the variance in intrinsic support and 10% of the variance for overt support they are, comparatively, fairly successful. Indeed, while not directly comparable, the highest Pseudo-R² that Graham and Sukhtankar (2004) report for their three models of Linzian support for democracy is 0.0164.

V. DISCUSSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The research questions driving the analysis are timeless and this article is by no means the last word on the relationships between socioeconomic context and status, on one hand, and support for democracy and the quality of democracy on the other hand. While the foregoing analysis defies sweeping conclusions about support for democracy in post-authoritarian Latin America, it makes some noteworthy empirical contributions that may lead to further theoretical advances.

By separating intrinsic and overt support for democracy we observe that they exhibit different socioeconomic dynamics. The most important predictors of overt and intrinsic support for democracy in Latin America are also the most proximate: education and income. Yet the diffusion of values that are intrinsic to democracy in the region also depends heavily on aggregate levels of economic development. However, we observe a negative relationship between economic development and overt support. This suggests that overt support is less a function of economic development and more a function of the extent to which the fruits of economic development alleviate persistent poverty and are equally distributed across society.

If overt support for democracy is indeed a function of poverty and inequality, as this analysis suggests, it nuances the Easton/Lipset “reservoir” theory of democratic legitimacy and stability. According to the theory, the depths of the region’s “reservoirs of legitimacy” should, presumably, vary with respect to economic development. But the finding that economic development cannot offset the negative effects of inequality and poverty on democratic legitimacy, i.e. overt support for democracy, is an important addendum to the “reservoir” theory of legitimacy. Perhaps access to education, which increases with each successive generation, will be the key to solidifying democratic legitimacy in Latin America where the major redistributive demands have ceased to become mobilized. While only more research can confirm these notions, they are fertile ground for the comparative study of democratic legitimacy in post-War Europe and post-authoritarian Latin America.

If the finding that intrinsic support for democracy fluctuates with economic development holds true, it may be evidence that intrinsic support for democracy follows similar trajectories and displays similar patterns as Inglehart’s postmaterialist values. This is certainly true with respect to education and income. But at least two tasks remain unfinished. First, using Inglehart and Welzel’s (2003) “self-expression” values as a point of departure, scholars should draw on the post-authoritarian experience in Latin America for a deeper reflection about which cultural values are intrinsic to the forging of effective new democracies.

Second, if intrinsic support improves democracy’s “effectiveness” or respect for the rule of law, as Inglehart and Welzel (2003) claim, we should see some correlation between intrinsic support

–at the country and/or individual levels– and citizens holding elites accountable or exacting “social accountability” (Smulovitz & Peruzzotti, 2000). Indeed, in the last five years citizens in the countries with the highest rates of intrinsic support in our sample –Uruguay, Argentina, and Brazil– have mobilized at the ballot box, in the streets, and in the press to demand more accountable politicians. Meanwhile, the absence of the rule of law at the level of political and economic elites has been rampant since the early 1990s in the two countries with the lowest averages of intrinsic support: Venezuela and Peru. But the political-cultural roots of these phenomena are not clear and, thus, we need to dig deeper into the dimensions of support for democracy in post-authoritarian Latin America.

Going forward, the relevance of support for democracy in the formation of high-quality democracy in the region must be probed. Intrinsic and overt support do not exist in a vacuum. Most likely they are parts of larger, systematic attitudinal clusters at large in the polity. Discovering the nature of these clusters and how they relate to different forms of political and associational participation may reveal the inner-workings of the political culture/quality-of-democracy nexus. These further steps are essential to understanding how such patterns inform future democratic development. This study provides background insight for studies in this vein by establishing how socioeconomic context shapes the formation of intrinsic and overt support for democracy in Latin America.

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